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Directorate of Intelligence

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3.5(c)

Terrorism Review

3.5(c)

7 July 1983

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Terrorism Review 3.5(c)

7 July 1983

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23 Argentina: Status of the Monteneros 3.5(c)
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Argentina: Status of the Montoneros 3.5(c)

3.5(c) up to several dozen leftist Montonero guerrillas have reentered the country and may be planning to resume military activities. Well-publicized incidents—interruptions of television broadcasts by Montonero propaganda speeches, discovery of weapons caches, and other crimes for which the terrorists reportedly have claimed responsibility—have reinforced concerns. 3.3(b)(1) since early April, the police have captured some 10 Montoneros, and the press reports that police have killed several leaders in firefights. 3.5(c)

The deaths of the Montonero leaders—one of whom was reportedly found with weapons, funds, and plans for further subversive activity—have been used by regime officials to bolster the position of the security services against civilian critics who have called for an end to the military's role in internal security matters. Regime leaders, for example, followed up the most recent shootout with a highly publicized report that detailed the history of Montonero terrorist activity. They also privately briefed leading politicians on the ongoing terrorist threat. Although there is growing evidence that the shootings may have been staged executions, the report and briefings have thus far helped dissipate criticism by most moderate politicians; all but the harshest regime critics have publicly acknowledged the need for continued efforts to combat subversion. 3.5(c)

In our view, the Montoneros are unlikely to mount more than small-scale operations over the coming months. The security forces continue to successfully penetrate their organization abroad and apparently have had little difficulty in ferreting out what little remains of the terrorist network in Argentina. In addition to the high personal risk of renewed terrorist actions, the Montoneros may calculate that more intense activities could prompt a military crackdown, posing a threat to the transition to civilian rule, 3.3(b)(1) scheduled for next January. The security forces apparently recognize these constraints and 3.3(b)(1) do not expect any significant actions by the Montoneros until well after the military leaves power. 3.5(c)

For now and probably beyond elections in October, the Montoneros are likely to focus on political action. 3.3(b)(1) they continue to work through organized labor and leftist political parties. The extreme left wing of the predominant Peronist Party appears to be especially open to Montonero influence. Its leader, Vicente Saadi, 3.3(b)(1) is a longtim backer of the Montoneros and receives a monthly stipend from funds kept in Mexico. In addition, his newspaper, *La Voz*, was started about two years ago with Montonero capital and has become an important vehicle for the organization's propaganda. 3.5(c)

Should the Montoneros decide to renew terrorist activity, moral support would remain strong among some Latin American leftists, but we judge that material assistance, if forthcoming, would be limited. The Mexicans and Bolivians, for example, while willing to provide a safehaven, would not supply the Montoneros with weapons and would probably block significant arms buys and military activity within 3.3(b)(1) their borders. The Cubans, have renewed their commitment to the terrorists after a year's respite. Havana, however, is already spread thin and, considering the high political costs and low likelihood of success, is unlikely to furnish more than shelter, training, some financial assistance, and covert propaganda support; Nicaragua would probably follow a similar policy. Outside Latin America, the PLO would probably continue to provide training and political support. 3.5(c)

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